



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 11/20/2008

Commissioners Present: M. Hope Berkowitz, B. Cohen, A. Frisch, M. Kramer, M. Logan (arrived 8:20pm), S. Makowka, M. Penzenik (arrived 8:23pm), T. Smurzynski, J. Worden

Commissioners Not Present: J. Hindmarsh, M. Potter

Guests: L. Leveille, L. Ivers, R. Ivers, S. Stafford, J. Salocks, J. Egan

1. **AHDC Meeting Opens** 8:10pm
2. **Appointment of alternate Commissioners to Mt Gilboa District Commission:** B. Cohen, A. Frisch, T. Smurzynski for all hearings, M. Logan appointed for hearing b (147 Lowell Street) in place of M. Kramer (recusal)
3. **Approval of minutes from October 23, 2008** – motion by A. Frisch, T. Smurzynski seconded, approved unanimously
4. **Communications**
 - a. E-mail and application for CONA for 14 Westmoreland – attending hearing
 - b. S. Makowka had phone call with commissioner applicant
 - c. E-mail re; request for Formal Hearing 147 Lowell Street
 - d. Call re: possible illegal work at 393-395 Mass. Ave. (has proper permits)
 - e. Letter from FST Engineers re: Mass. Ave. Corridor Project
 - f. Resume from D. Levy for consideration as AHDC commissioner
 - g. E-mail from neighbors re: 88 Westminster Ave. (Ivers)
 - h. S. Makowka received 2 Board Of Survey hearings (50 Washington St. – not in District) and 88 Westminster Ave. (coming tonight for informal)

5. New Business

Hearings (typically last around 20 minutes per application) 8:20pm

- a. Formal Hearing re: 81 Westminster Ave. (Lemire) for restoration of porch balustrade/railing
 Applicant Mr. Lemire presented information including pre district (approx. '89) pictures and an older drawing of house. He is asking to restore window back to original size as shown in old picture and replace balusters on front porch. The house was built in 1882. Applicant is planning to re-use railings, just changing balusters and raising top rail (the existing railings are 24-26" high) in same pattern as shown in samples of other railings in the neighborhood. M. Penzenik asked about leaving handrail same height but applicant stressed that rail height decision driven by worries about kids climbing over the porch railings.

The applicant explained desire to replace 1980's era non-original front facing and side windows as well. S. Makowka explained that restoring original window pattern seemed appropriate, however, since the windows were not part of the application, that change cannot be approved because public notice was not given for this change.

J. Worden read from the original Mt Gilboa Study the description of this house and the reference therein to the pattern of the balustrade which was a style unique to one of the original builders active in district. The applicant indicated that he dislikes the railing and would like to replace. M. Penzenik suggested an alternative would be to keep existing balustrade design but install plexiglass on porch side to keep children from climbing the railing.

M. Hope Berkowitz questioned the appropriateness of requiring the Applicant to stick with original style of balustrade.

M. Frisch agreed with M. Hope Berkowitz. S. Makowka expressed his concern is that allowing the removal of the current railing might not be appropriate since this style railing is an original feature of the District and one that is noted in the original study document. He continued that even if the replacement is specified in a historically appropriate style used on other neighboring house, the result could be a move toward every house looking the same, thus losing the distinctive architectural features the district was created to preserve. M. Penzenik said you see lots of railings that are the same height as this railing. S. Makowka suggested keeping existing balustrade but installing a separate matching railing at a greater height to preserve distinctive features while addressing applicants safety concerns. M. Logan suggested adding vertical balusters with rail above while others suggested just a new railing with one midpoint support.

M. Penzenik moved that the Mt. Gilboa/Crescent Hill Historic District Commission, having fully reviewed the application before it, finds that the project under consideration, if constructed such that the original existing balustrade be retained as is (installation of plexiglass on house side of porch railing approved if desired) with an additional handrail six inches above the existing handrail to match existing handrail. Final details to be approved by monitor prior to installation.

Seconded by J. Worden. A. Frisch – opposed, M. Hope Berkowitz opposed (2)– in favor: B. Cohen, M. Penzenik, J. Worden, M. Kramer, T. Smurzynski (5 in favor); Passed 5 to 2; Monitor appointed: M. Penzenik.

b. Formal Hearing re: 147 Lowell Street (Nyberg) for removal of asbestos siding

M. Kramer recused herself due to current business relationship with applicant. S. Makowka appointed M. Logan appointed as alternate commissioner for Mt Gilboa HDC.

J. Nyberg described his desire to remove the asbestos siding on the structure and replace with complimentary cedar shingles or clapboard (consistent with original siding). He provided historical photographs of the house prior top alteration which appeared to show clapboard on 1st floor, and shingles on 2nd floor. B. Cohen moved that the Mt. Gilboa/Crescent Hill Historic District Commission, having fully reviewed the application before it, finds that the project under consideration for removal of asbestos siding and restoration/replacement of original clapboard and/or shingle siding with like material. , will be in harmony and not incongruous with the historical and architectural values of the district. Seconded by A. Frisch. Per ensuing discussion, B. Cohen amended motion to specify that applicant receive approval of final designs from monitor. Amended motion seconded and voted unanimously in favor. Monitor appointed: T. Smurzynski.

c. Informal Hearing re: 14 Westmoreland Ave. (Leveille) re: driveway and wall. Ms. Leveille was present to discuss. Stonewall between their house and house next door needs to be rebuilt and she would prefer to raise height by 10" to make driveway even instead of sloping from the house. Stones will be reused and matching stones will be used. In response to questions, the Applicant explained that they planned to remove the existing chain link fence for construction, but planned to put back in place per desire of neighbors who probably own the fence. They will also be removing 10 feet of asphalt from end of driveway. S. Makowka clarified – raising wall 10", removing chain link fence and putting back up after work is done, current wall follows the grade and will keep same angle, and stones to be similar as what is there. Thereafter, there ensued a detailed discussion of how the higher wall would be constructed and how it would terminate at the sidewalk since the current height is at grade. After much discussion, applicant agreed that it would be helpful to review options and design details before moving forward with higher wall and grade changes. S. Makowka summarized discussion: Commission will issue CONA for repair/restoration of existing wall with like materials, and using same dimensions. Applicant may apply for further changes in the future after more study. Meeting attendee J. Nyberg suggested that the applicant should get good survey done to delineate lot lines.

d. Informal Hearing re: 82 Westminster Ave. (Ivers) re: new home construction. S Makowka reminded everyone that this is an informal hearing so there will be no voting on anything, just an informational meeting tonight. Applicants Louise and Richard Ivers described their desire to build a house to be located off of Elder Terrace and behind 187 Lowell Street. They provided several pictures of site and some abutting properties as well as a plot plan that showed proposed building outlines. They explained that their intention is to do something that is tasteful, and although they don't have a house plan yet, they are thinking probably Stick Victorian in style to mimic other houses in neighborhood. The square footage of lot is 11,796 and the square footage of house would be roughly 3,000 with a footprint of a little less than 1,500. Want it to look like it grew there in the neighborhood, not plopped in by a helicopter. Elder Terrace is private right of way.

Commissioners said they'd need topographical model to fully consider the proposed building and its appropriateness in its surroundings. There appears to be a lot of grade there so creating a site for a house would require re-grading.

For example, a big retaining wall would not be appropriate. Applicant said he doesn't like giant walls either. B. Cohen asked for clarification on square footage. Applicant responded that the total property less than 12,000, but that includes the panhandle. Right of way from building lot to elder terrace. The panhandle part is 1910, so lot is 9700 sf.

A. Frisch said he would need to see how this would look before he could ever approve. S. Makowka said it's important to demonstrate to commissioners why anything there would be appropriate at all. For example, how will it

relate to its surrounding, also footprint, dimensions, architectural details all have to be approved, but for purposes of the model we are looking for massing, spacing, and relationship to surrounding properties. Respective grading and heights of other buildings needs to be incorporated into model. B. Cohen said this is key to figure out how to make it work, especially since this proposed building is basically behind someone else's house. We must know how this property will affect those other houses. S. Makowka said he wants them to think hard about the sizes of other houses in the area – there are probably not that many houses of this size.

S. Makowka also noted that the proposed changes have been submitted to the Board of Survey (BOS). Per the Commission's and the Town's past positions, he stated that the AHDC will file comments with the BOS reiterating that no permit can be issued by BOS until the appropriate certificate has been issued by the HDC, thus they BOS should defer consideration of proposed roadway.

Meeting attendee J. Nyberg said what may be more appropriate would be a barn in that location. Could potentially complement both sides. M. Penzenik said that makes sense why that road is there. S. Stafford said the easement for Symmes is probably why the paper street is in existence. Proponent Louise Ivers extended an invitation to the Commission to go up and see the property.

e. David Levy, potential Commissioner attended to introduce himself to Commission as potential Commissioner. David Levy lives in Mt. Gilboa/Crescent Hill district, 7 Westmoreland Ave. He sees a lot of activity in district, is interested in historic preservation, architecture, contracting, and thought this was a good fit. Feels district needs representation. Interested in serving, kids are older and he has more time. S. Makowka asked if anyone has questions. J. Worden asked him his thoughts about 40B. D. Levy replied that every application has to be treated on a case by case basis but a 40B development in an historic district at a location such as 187 Lowell St would be clearly inappropriate and would be a sad state. He is a big proponent of affordable housing, but believes a level of appropriateness needs to go along with any project. David stated that he used to work at an organization in Cambridge that bought and restored historic buildings. They created affordable housing and preserved historic structures at the same time. S. Makowka moved we forward resume to Board of Selectmen, seconded by A. Frisch, approved unanimously.

e. Executive Session (If necessary)- Not necessary

6. Other Business

- a. 2009 Calendar for AHDC Meetings: 1/22; 2/26; 3/26; 4/23; 5/21; 6/25; 7/23; 08/27; 9/24; 10/22; 11/19; 12/17 (Not all months are the 4th week) – Approved – post with town clerk.
- b. Meeting with potential Commissioner applicant – David Levy attended
- c. Renewal of Commissioners with BOS – Carol will check with BOS for dates for commissioner renewals
- d. Approval of Draft letter concerning Board of Survey hearing for 82 Westminster. Moved approval by J. Worden, seconded by M. Kramer, all voted in favor.

7. Old Business

- a. Preservation Loan Program Update
- b. Outreach to Neighborhoods & Realtors.
- c. Status of projects by monitors – S. Makowka – recommended removing houses of violation, but keeping a separate list of those properties.

8. Review of Projects

Meeting Adjourned 10:20pm

Carol Greeley
Executive Secretary
cc: HDC Commissioners
Arlington Historical Commission, JoAnn Robinson and Richard Duffy, Co-Chairs
Building Inspector, Mr. Michael Byrne
Building Dept., Richard Vallarelli
Planning Dept. and Redevelopment Board, Mr. Kevin O'Brien
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Town Clerk
Robbins Library
MIS Department

